



News Release

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More teen boys getting vaccinated against cancer causing disease

OLYMPIA — Significantly more teen boys in Washington are getting vaccinated against HPV, according to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Data for teen immunizations were released this week by the CDC in the [2014 National Immunization Survey](#). Washington immunization rates for teens rose for every vaccine and dose, except for the third dose of HPV for teen girls. The HPV vaccines protect against human papilloma virus strains that cause 75 percent of cervical cancers; the vaccine is the best tool for HPV-related cancers. The data also showed significant increases in HPV vaccine coverage for teen boys. The Department of Health is launching a statewide campaign in August aimed at improving HPV vaccine rates. The campaign encourages parents of teens to [get the facts about HPV](#) and talk to their child's health care provider about the vaccine. The campaign will reach parents through digital and radio advertising, as well as through partnerships with community organizations.

HPV immunization rates are just one of the rates that are on the rise in our state. More teens in Washington are getting important immunizations. Yet, rates also show they're not completely protected. In 2014, immunization rates for Washington teens that protect against whooping cough and meningitis were higher than the national average, while rates for measles, hepatitis B and chicken pox protection were lower.

"Despite the rise in immunization coverage, overall protection is not where it should be," said Scott Lindquist, state communicable disease epidemiologist for the Department of Health. "As a parent, you can protect your kids from cancer and serious diseases like measles or meningitis by getting your teens vaccinated. Getting everyone up to date on recommended vaccines, including HPV vaccines, keeps families healthy."

Chicken pox vaccination rates increased since 2013, though Washington rates remain lower than the national average. Washington teens saw an increase in Tdap vaccinations from 2013, with current coverage rates at about 89 percent.

Schools in Washington have [immunization requirements](#) for kids to attend class. Parents should use the next several weeks to make sure their kids have all the shots they need to return to school. Kids who aren't fully vaccinated may be sent home if there is an illness outbreak at the school. Parents should also schedule a yearly well-child checkup to get kids any immunizations that are due. The school year may seem far away, but visits with healthcare providers are getting booked up now.

Unvaccinated teens can easily spread diseases to younger kids who are more vulnerable to illness. Recent outbreaks of whooping cough and measles in Washington show the importance of getting more kids fully vaccinated for the best protection against diseases that can be prevented and could cause illness or death.

Washington provides all recommended vaccines at no cost for kids through age 18, and they're available from healthcare professionals across the state. Although healthcare providers may charge an office-visit fee and an administration fee for the vaccine, a family that can't afford to pay can ask that the administration fee be waived.

For help finding a health care provider or an immunization clinic, call your local health agency, visit the [ParentHelp123 resource finder](#), or call the Family Health Hotline, 1-800-322-2588.

The [Department of Health website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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